

LIFE

The Stones Are Rolling Again

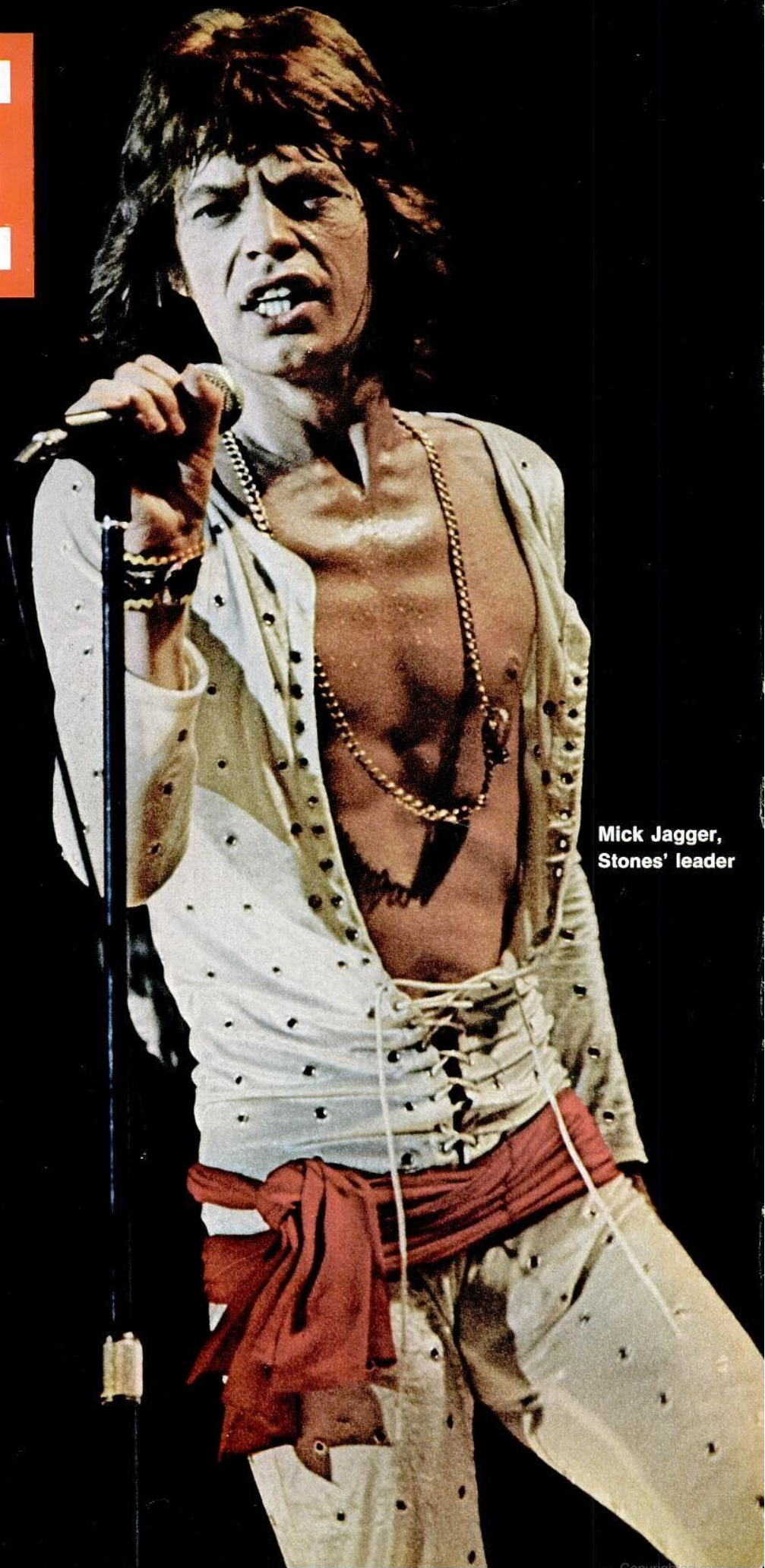
The New Role
for Fathers
Begins at Birth

The Boom
in Dome Homes

What Is
Barbara Walters
Trying to Prove?

Mick Jagger,
Stones' leader

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The Stones Blast Through the Land



As fans in Los Angeles rejoice and celebrate, Mick Jagger steams up in the most elaborate rock tour ever

by **THOMAS THOMPSON**

First, a smear of purple eyeshadow to further hood and sullen the famous lids. Next, a slash of black eyeliner and mascara to stretch the limpid lashes. Finally, a splash of golden sparkle flakes at the corner of each eye and, for good measure, on the chest—for it will soon be bared, perspiring and glistening. Now Mick Jagger is running in place, revving up the frail, lithe body in the lilac jump suit and the silver-lamé frock coat, ready to claim the stage at the Los Angeles Forum, where 18,000 devotees are throbbing, hearts racing and climbing in anticipation of the Rolling Stones.

The Rolling Stones!

Are they still among us?

How can they be? In history's first dis-

posable society, where everything from graceful landmarks to diapers to rock groups is used and thrown away, how can the Stones survive? In a decade—ten years!—of performing, they have earned some of the worst press clippings since Mussolini. To read them is to scan the underside of a rock. One would gather that the Stones began their journey on the River Styx. Their official trademark—on record labels, posters, jeweled pins—is a taunting, devil's-red tongue stuck out at the world. Their spoor is scandal, dark rumor, divorce, adultery, illegitimate children, drugs (when Jagger wears the trademark "Coke" sewn onto his jacket, he is not endorsing cola), even blood and violent death.

The last came on a blustery December night outside San Francisco in 1969, at the now in-

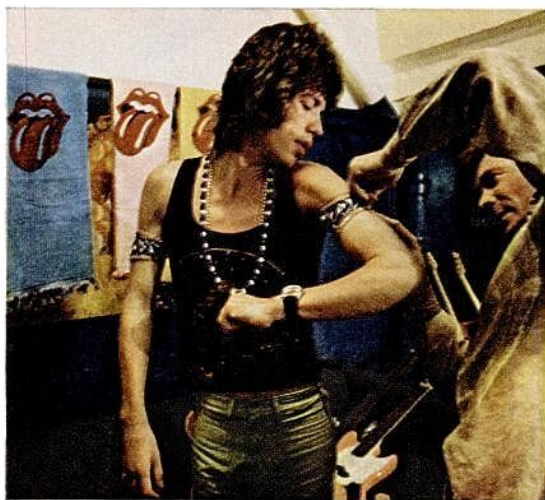
famous raceway called Altamont, where the Stones concluded their sixth American tour with a free rock concert. While 300,000 listened to Jagger shriek his song *Sympathy for the Devil*, an 18-year-old youth near the stage was stabbed to death by one of the evening's Praetorian Guards—the Hell's Angels, hired for \$500 worth of beer to protect the Stones. Four people in all died from various tragedies, and the wise men of rock pronounced the end of the counterculture. The Woodstock nation had fallen. Haight-Ashbury would become just another intersection. Midnight was on the children of flowers and love and it would never leave. Apocalypse at Altamont!

Much of the prophecy came to pass. Haight-Ashbury is just another San Francisco intersection now (though tourists keep stealing the

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With his makeup and jewelry in place, Mick Jagger (right) extends an arm for his wardrobe man to fasten his slave bracelets.



Preening and primping, the Stones ready themselves for a San Francisco concert. Keith Richard (above) uses a school-child's paint kit to color his eyelids. Jagger dons a top hat and gets an approving laugh from tour manager Peter Rudge (right). Finally, Jagger ties a sash around his waist (below). He will strip it off during the show and use it as everything from a lasso to a gentle whip on ecstatic girls at the edge of the stage.

**Photographed
by
JIM
MARSHALL**



Jagger decided the U.S. was ripe for another take

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street sign as a souvenir), and the windows of psychedelia are boarded up. Bill Graham closed both Fillmores East and West, the twin temples of rock music. Underground newspapers by the scores shriveled and died. The streets and the campuses became silent but for the swish of the Frisbee.

But here it is, the summer of '72, and once again the Rolling Stones are sweeping across America. Eight weeks, 30 cities, 50 concerts, 750,000 customers ecstatically pulling between \$3 and \$4 million from their jeans pockets and shoving it through the ticket windows after waiting in line for sometimes 48 hours. The total could be twice, thrice, if the Stones had the stamina to perform more often. "They could play three months in San Francisco and probably six in New York and sell out every seat," said one California rock figure. With the Beatles disintegrated and Bob Dylan not appearing in public anymore, the Stones are the only deities visible on Olympus.

But there are other reasons, beyond survival, beyond arrogance and lurid report. The Rolling Stones have become—perhaps they always were and only the kids knew it—one of the most visually and musically stunning ensembles in any form of music. When the announcer at each concert says, almost matter-of-factly, in introduction, "The best rock-and-roll band in the world," he is not exaggerating. The Stones have taken for their specialty the most American of musical idioms, music of the Deep South—black man's music, soul music, blues, music of raw, sudden sex—and written it anew and made it their own.

Formed in 1962, the Stones consist of five working-class Englishmen ranging in age from 22 to 34. Four of the original five Stones are still in the group. A fifth, guitarist Brian Jones, a heavy drug user, was found dead at the bottom of his swimming pool in 1969 and was replaced by Mick Taylor, who is both baby-faced and clean-cut, a departure for the group's image.

A year ago, Mick Jagger decided America was ripe for another tour. The scene over here seemed quieter, the mood less inflammatory. The idea was quickly endorsed by Keith Richards, the Stone who composes most of the music along with Jagger. "I think it is absolutely essential for us to tour," he said. Both men feel the Beatles began their decline when they stopped performing in public and tried to re-

main superstars from the privacy of recording studios.

"I can't even remember the Beatles," said Jagger. "It seems so long ago. That was another era."

Moreover, both men actually relish touring, despite the one-night stands and the cloud of potential trouble that seems to hang over every appearance they make. Keith Richards has composed more than half of the Stones' music while in the heartland of America. "I suppose in a hectic atmosphere, one gets hectic ideas," he says. "Everything speeds up. I usually write best about 4 a.m. in a motel in a place like Albuquerque. When one has exhausted the bar and other essentials, one takes refuge in a guitar and a tape recorder."

Jagger put himself into condition for the tour by going around the world, trying to find anonymity in Tahiti and Bali and Thailand. While he spent most of his time "just hanging out on the beaches," Jagger also quietly explored temples and archaeological ruins. Behind his public fright mask is a quiet, usually polite, and surprisingly literate inquirer. He collects antiques, knows art, can quote obscure poets and is happy when he comes across an exceptional wine. In conversation, he moves easily from quadraphonic sound to philosophy, sometimes surprising a visitor by suggesting that he and the Rolling Stones are the latest in a long line of British antipuritans. "There's two sides to the British, always has been. Like the Roundheads and the Cavaliers," he says. Curious words from a man who writes lyrics like "You can't always get what you want." But then his friends range from little-known black gutbucket musicians in the backwoods of Tennessee to Rudolf Nureyev. "Me and Nureyev have flaming rows about whether it takes more talent and discipline to be a ballet dancer or a pop singer," Jagger says. "He used to put me down a lot, but I think I've converted him. I told him I would have wanted to dance myself, but I never had the opportunity."

Deep into the night—Jagger normally stays up until dawn and sleeps most of the day—he will speak almost wistfully of how he would like to change the Stones' music and move his group into new areas. But the fans want the pounding sensuality that the Stones have made famous and will accept nothing else. "At the beginning of this century," Jagger says, "people came in and absolutely destroyed music. People like Stravinsky and Schoenberg swept away the old forms. They made history. We've written hundreds of different songs, plaintive ballads even, but we keep coming back to rock. We've sort of honed it out and continued it as a pure, conscious thing. We haven't made it fancy, we've added no embellishments. We have to accept what the people want." There is none of the elegance, none of the bold creativity of Beatles compositions here. There is only brilliant imitation of a now historic American art form, music that shrieks of sexual triumph and sexual despair.

All the Stones now live in the south of France for tax reasons, and early this year Jag-

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The male peacock traditionally wears the brightest feathers, but Jagger (left) is outclassed by Stone wife Mrs. Mick Taylor, decked out for a party.



An old tragedy still haunted San Francisco

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ger found a convenient 19th-century villa, a curious place once owned by an eccentric British admiral who planted his garden with trees collected from all over the world. In the villa's abandoned basement, the Stones recorded an album to be released coincidentally with the current tour. Called *Exile on Main Street*, and decorated with grotesque photos of carnival freaks, the work reached record shops the last week in May and quickly sold almost a million copies, remarkable for a two-record set.

Meantime, a quiet and efficient young Cambridge graduate named Peter Rudge began making secret plans for the tour. Discreetly he booked auditoriums and coliseums all over America for June and July. Only then did he invite music promoters to produce each city's concert. Once word was out, he was suddenly a man in a wind tunnel. Incredible offers raced across the sea by telephone and cable. One promoter offered a flat \$1 million for a Stones appearance at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. "I turned him down quickly," said Rudge.

"That isn't what rock concerts should be."

Rudge's more immediate concern was security, and to line up the chartered airliner and trucks necessary to carry the huge production, as elaborate as a Broadway touring company—35 people, 500 pieces of sound and lighting equipment, the most complex ever attempted in the business. Most important, he devised complicated plans to distribute Stones tickets fairly in each city. His happy problem was not to sell tickets but to make sure that they were sold at the ceiling price, \$6.50, that they would not fall into scalpers' hands, that there would be no counterfeits, and that there would be no riots when they went on sale.

In New York, for example, more than 560,000 prospective customers sent in postcards with name, address and phone number. A certified public accounting firm then made a random selection to feed into a computer, which sorted out and discarded dupes (the fear was that somebody would send in 100 cards and buy up blocks to scalp). Finally, the computer coughed up the 55,000 notifications that so-and-so was blessed and would he or she come to Madison Square Garden at a specific time to pick up the precious cardboards! In Los Angeles, 56,000 tickets were sold in less than four hours. The scene was repeated in every city. One San Francisco girl spent 36 hours camping out in line only to reach the window and discover that the last ticket had just been sold. She cried, "I am going off to die," and ran away sobbing.

Seemingly an hour of frantic improvisation, the Stones' act (above) was carefully rehearsed in an empty Swiss theater last spring.

At their first concert in Vancouver, Canada, more than 2,000 youths who had no tickets suddenly stormed the back of the hall. "I was frightened," Rudge said. "The kids came at us in waves. We pushed sound boxes against the doors to block them. At one time, there were about six of us holding off 2,000." But as soon as the Stones went onstage, as soon as the unmistakable pounding chords seeped through the walls, the crowd suddenly stopped, backed off and drifted away.

At San Francisco, although there was little talk about it, the specter of Altamont hung unmistakably in the air. The Stones refused to accept any responsibility for that tragedy, even though they allowed the release of a movie of their 1969 tour which featured the killing. And few could argue the fact that the aura which cloaks the Stones was some sort of contributory factor.

"Of course some people wanted to say Altamont was the end of an era," said Jagger, as he settled into his closely guarded San Francisco hotel room. "People like that are like fashion writers. Perhaps it was the end of *their* era, the end of their naïveté. I would have thought it would have ended long before Altamont."

Keith Richard, the most forbidding-looking Stone, with his cyclonic hair and gold gypsy earring, remembered Altamont as "just another

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Safe at the top of a \$1 billion rock pile

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er gig—a gig where I had to split quick." There were, he said, "far worse gigs." For example? "The last time we played Long Beach, in 1969, a terrifying scene. We were sitting in a limousine that was literally being crushed by people sitting and jumping on the roof. Suddenly blood spurted down the windshield and we were holding up the roof with our hands."

Richard says that the Stones are, if not quite as wholesome as the youth of Moral Re-Armament, at least nothing like their public image. "Wherever people see evil," he mused, "usually there is fear and paranoia within the viewer. We've never tried to hide anything or cover up our lives. If some people see us and are scared of us and think us evil, there's nothing we can do for them. That's *their* problem. I suppose this nonsense about us appeals to a lot of people, and it is reinforced by timid reporters who should be sent to interview Princess Margaret about her charities and her twin sets of pearls."

At concert time in San Francisco, there were police in abundance *outside* but few visible within, chiefly muscular young men wearing T-shirts with the printed legend: "If you don't keep the aisles clear, we will lose our license." Bill Graham, producer of the San Francisco concerts and sort of the Sol Hurok of rock, has a philosophy, aged now with success, that enforcement must be outside the hall to keep troublemakers at bay. Legitimate ticket-holders inside want no trouble, only to hear the music. Gone is the awesome scene at a mid-'60s Stones concert when police in helmets ringed the stage and burly guards were kept busy catching hysterical fans hurling themselves at the stage. Some Stones concerts during that period broke up five minutes after they started. One security man grew so tired of catching *boys* flinging themselves at the stage in hopes of touching Jagger that he snapped at one, "What's the matter, don't you like girls?" The Stones, it should be said, decidedly like girls, but their unisex appearance can confuse.

The world of rock is big business, high pressure, organized, regimented. From record sales, concert appearances and merchandising, the rock music industry grosses an estimated \$1 billion a year. It is one of America's major enterprises and the Stones are at the summit, the preeminent musical organization, five of them millionaires many times over. "The end," says an awed Atlantic Records executive, distributor of their music, "is infinity."

As an enormous backdrop of the arrogant red tongue unfurled from the ceiling of the San Francisco hall, the Stones leaped onstage, Jagger holding back a moment for his entrance. Above all there is Jagger. He is possessed, as

few performers are—Callas, El Cordobés, Nureyev come to mind—with a stunning, electric-shock stage capacity. Watch him prowl the space, pantherlike at first, suddenly a marionette abandoned by the string-puller, now cheerleader at an orgy, the voice harsh, torn from the throat, the lyrics banal, the music overwhelming in its amplification. None of the Stones can hear the others as they play. Jagger counts himself lucky if he can catch the drumbeat. They stay together by instinct and feeling. This, of course, is the key. The tunes are less important than the emotions they stir.

Hearing the Stones, the unsophisticated cannot understand Jagger's slurred words, one finds no particular distinction in the melodies. But somehow everything comes together, all the chemicals coalesce in a fire-hot brew that spews over the rejoicing crowd. There is no hint of hostility here, rather the sense of a sexy celebration. This is the new maturity of rock. They no longer come to scream, only to enjoy and participate in their music.

Jagger has decreed that no press or VIPs can be seated in the first 20 rows at any concert. He needs the enthusiasm of the young to fuel his performance. "I can feel 'em down there," he says. "I need each and every one of 'em." The devotees, some of whom knelt and kissed the floor as they entered, are wearing their finest: magnificent girls in black leotards and lace tablecloths tied about their waists, their men wearing everything from overalls to silver body paint with astrological signs on their foreheads. The air is ripe with grass, incense for this particular mass. Someone throws a Borsalino hat onto the stage. Jagger snatch-

es it, puts it on his head, prances with it, throws it back to the crowd. A shriek of joy. It is now a relic! Jagger is visibly pleased. No one is thinking of Altamont now.

Suddenly, terribly, an explosion! For one suspended moment, an eternal moment though but a fragment of a second, some of the older heads swivel in anxiety. But the moment passes. Jagger, if he heard it, does not pause. It is only a firecracker outside.

The hour spins by crazily. Jagger refreshes his flayed larynx with gulps of beer and Jack Daniel's. He moves into a scorching song called *Midnight Rambler*, a tale of nocturnal sexual prowls. At its climax he seizes a golden belt and flogs the stage, an imaginary woman. As the belt strikes the wood, Jagger is instantly bathed in a pool of satanic crimson light.

Now Jagger summons a metal bowl and dips his hands into it. Is he Pilate washing his hands of San Francisco? No. He is scooping up rose petals, hundreds of them. He buries his face in the blossoms, then tosses one handful in the air. They drift onto his soggy head. He throws handfuls out into the multitude beneath him.

Now he is gone. The lights go out. The crowd surges forward with a building roar, beseeching an encore.

But the Stones are vanished. Tucked into their mobile home at the rear entrance and hurried away. Why should they linger? With \$4 million just down the road, the long, sometimes troubled but always golden American road, the Stones are rolling once more. ■

Though he gulps vitamins, protein pills and bean curd daily, Jagger is emotionally and physically drained after each performance.

